

***Where Are They Now? An Examination on College Recruitment  
and Retention of GSRM Populations***

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

Recruitment and retention are often considered hallmarks of a university's success. As more students than ever are attending higher education, there is greater pressure for colleges and universities to provide their students with the best chance to succeed. Surprisingly, gender and sexual minority students are often left out of this conversation. The vast majority of colleges and universities simply do not acknowledge the presence of queer students on campus. Through analyzing the existing literature, this essay explores the importance of Ball State actively engaging with a growing LGBT+ student population and provides a recommendation on how to be a leader in queer student success.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Ro-Anne Royer Engle for advising me throughout this process. She continues to be a strong force of inclusion and support for marginalized students at Ball State University, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with her in various ways during my time on this campus.

Additionally, I would like to thank Melissa Ginotti, Eric Pegués, Astyn Quander, and Sidney Rice for their hard work supporting the GSRM population at Ball State, and particularly for supporting and encouraging me over the past several years.

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## Process Analysis

During my time at Ball State, I discovered new passions: education and advocacy. I got involved with Ball State Spectrum, the LGBT+ organization on campus, serving as Spectrum's Secretary for one semester, and Spectrum's Treasurer for five. Through this wonderful organization, I quickly realized how much I enjoyed developing others' potential, providing a source of knowledge, and fighting for justice.

Ball State University has gone through several changes during my time here. The student Senate successfully passed a bill requesting gender-neutral bathrooms all over campus (twice!), gender-neutral housing is currently in the works, and legislation is being developed regarding the need for a queer resource center (or director). Each of these initiatives has been predominantly student-led. Unfortunately, there has often been a lack of active response from the university, which I believe stems from a misconception that there are few queer students on campus. Each policy change or recommendation has been treated as though it only benefits the handful of students who are vocally involved in student government. Students have to go beyond proving support for a piece of legislation – they repeatedly have to prove that they, as GSRM students, exist.

Why is it up to students to prove their own existence? Through personal experience, I have seen many students at Ball State who struggle to complete their degree. I know many students who have had to switch residence halls after having a homophobic roommate, who were outed by a teacher that refused to



call them anything but the legal name on their paperwork, or who just struggled academically. Each case is treated as an isolated incident, as opposed to a part in a larger pattern of marginalization.

Frustrated, I looked at other colleges and universities. I was extremely disappointed to discover that this was the norm. Most schools simply do not support their queer students the same way they support other marginalized communities (such as race or socioeconomic status). It is routinely up to GSRM students to demand change and make their voices heard. This is particularly troubling in a time where violence against these populations depends on people buying into the myth of nonexistence.

I read more articles for this essay than I have probably the rest of my life (but I'm a math major, so take that with a grain of salt). I spent a tremendous amount of time learning and outlining reasons why these statistics are so important. But this type of knowledge is not particularly helpful without some sort of application. I personally called at least a dozen schools, hoping that they would have implemented a method that I could look into, and hopefully apply to Ball State. After weeks of nothing, I finally found a possibility. Speaking with the Program Coordinator at Purdue University's LGBTQ Center, I discovered that not only does Purdue record statistics on queer student populations, but they also mark these statistics for retention purposes, and they have a similar student portal to Ball State!

The process certainly is not perfect, as they have only been using it for the past two years. Purdue has, however, made a huge, intentional step forward, becoming a pioneer in this area. Through many conversations with Purdue's LGBTQ center, I learned about applications on campus for these statistics, and started to develop a way to implement this process at Ball State, based off of Ball State's current student information system. Looking at our university's strategic plan, it appeared as though intentionally working with queer students could help Ball State reach several of its goals.

I hope that this essay is able to spark a conversation at Ball State. Even though I may not be here to see the results, GSRM students on campus are becoming increasingly visible and vocal about their needs. Ball State has a unique opportunity to listen to these student voices and take a massive, progressive leap forward, becoming an example that other universities may follow.

## Introduction

Recruitment and retention are some of the most talked about topics on college and university campuses. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 40 percent of 18- to 24-year olds enrolled in college in 2014, and undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase 14 percent from 17.3 million to 19.8 million students between 2014 and 2025 (NCES, 2016). The reasons young adults choose to attend college vary, but according to a 2012 survey by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI); students noted the ability to make money, and get a better job as the top two reasons for attending college (Pryor, Eagan, Palucki Blake, Hurtado, Berdan, & Case, 2012). With greater economic pressure to attend college and access to college being more attainable, many more young adults are opting to do so than in recent history. As colleges and universities receive this influx of students, they must work hard to ensure that the students stay at (and graduate from) those institutions. According to the HERI 2012 survey, 83 percent expected to graduate from the college they first attended, but the results of national surveys reveal that only 40 percent would complete their degree in 4 years (Pryor, et al., 2012). How do colleges and universities prepare to meet the needs of students who enroll? And how does student identity impact student success (retention and persistence)?

Through diverse research, "it has become clear that aspects of student's identity contribute to their success just as much as their academic preparation or study skills" (Windmeyer, Humphrey, & Barker, 2013). However, most institutions



“are missing key aspects of student’s identity, particularly identity based on sexual orientation. This oversight potentially makes some of the retention efforts futile” (Windmeyer, et al., 2013).

If we are talking about recruitment and retention, it’s imperative that we include the voices of GSRM<sup>1</sup> students. Refusing to do so allows this population to go underserved and unrecognized, effectively reducing queer students on college campuses to an invisible minority. We know that these students exist anecdotally, but are simply incapable of helping them without proof. This essay will contribute to the existing literature by highlighting the importance of recording statistics on and documenting student success of queer student populations and providing guidelines on doing so.

### **The Need for GSRM Support**

A 2007 article, *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Student Experiences: An Exploratory Study*, summarizes the existing literature surrounding queer college students (Longerbeam, Inkelas, Johnson, & Lee). They point out that, while research exists describing forms of discrimination, alcohol use/abuse, counseling practices, and even heterosexual students’ attitudes *about* LGB students, virtually no articles exist documenting “how LGB students perceive their

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<sup>1</sup> GSRM stands for “Gender, Sexual, and Romantic Minorities.” Whenever possible, this essay will use “GSRM” or “queer” to refer to students that fall into that category, as it simply provides the most inclusivity. When cited articles reference “LGBT” (with the letters in any order), it should be considered essentially equivalent to “GSRM.” If the article uses “LGB,” then it should be read as “sexual and romantic minority students.”



broader college experience, including how these experiences may be similar to or differ from those of heterosexual students" (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). This is extremely important, as "74% of LGB undergraduate and graduate students rated their campus as homophobic, and 60%... reported concealing their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid discrimination" (Longerbeam, et al., 2007).

There are several ways that colleges and universities can offer support for their queer students. "[T]he presence of out LGB resident assistants;... RAs and professional staff members who confronted homophobic remarks; programming about LGB issues and visible signs and symbols of support; and supportive roommates" all contribute positively to LGB students' residence hall environments (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). These students, however, are not passively waiting around for colleges to do something. Despite a 2010 survey that showed that "GLBT students rated their campus environment less positively than did straight students," out GSRM students were "more active and collaborative" on campus (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). In fact, "GLBT students had more contact with their faculty members than their straight peers," regardless of their "out" status (Rankin, et al., 2010). Gay men have the "highest perceptions in comparison to all other groups of ease with the academic transition to college and a sense of belonging," centering their social activities on their college peers (Longerbeam, et al., 2007).

This move is perhaps surprising, but is certainly needed, given the lack of support and recognition from many colleges and universities. As of a 2013

Campus Pride report, “less than 13% of colleges/universities prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and only about 6% have explicit protections inclusive of [t]ransgender people” (Windmeyer, et al., 2013). In a survey of admission departments for 147 institutions, only 33 claimed to have a GSRM office, a number that is likely inflated due to the opt-in nature of the survey (Einhaus, Viento, & Croteau, 2004). Campus Pride reports that “only 7% of campuses have an institutional support” for GSRM populations (Windmeyer, et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the responsibility of creating a supportive campus environment all too often falls onto the shoulders of out GSRM student populations and student-led campus organizations (Windmeyer, et al., 2013).

All of this has a direct impact on enrollment and student success. In 1994, “nearly 30 percent of LBG students considered their sexual orientation as a factor in making their college choice and 40 percent reported that their college choice would have been different if they had had information regarding the campus climate toward LBG individuals (Einhaus, et al., 2004). Alarming, 33 percent of LGB (and 38 percent of transgender) students reported *seriously considering leaving their institution* due to the lack of support or an affirming climate on campus (Windmeyer, et al., 2013). Einhaus, Viento, and Croteau “assert that it is the responsibility of college or university admissions officers to represent the LBGT-affirmative aspects of their institutions and actively seek LBGT high school students as potential candidates for enrollment” (2004). To avoid doing so is irresponsible at best and dangerous to students’ well being at worst.



How can institutions of higher education provide resources to GSRM populations? An essential first step is intentionally acknowledging the presence of those students in the first place. It is impossible to accurately determine the effectiveness of any inclusive initiatives without being able to support conclusions with data. Unfortunately, virtually no campuses currently allow for students to submit this information, both on college admission forms or post-enrollment. It is imperative that colleges and universities “know and count their out LGBT students to provide necessary services and/or maintain proper safety and campus climate” (Windmeyer, et al., 2013).

### **Tracking GSRM Populations**

What is the best way for colleges to keep track of their GSRM populations? Unfortunately, there are no industry best practices established for institutions of higher education. An attempt to create a standard was initiated in 2010, when Campus Pride and the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals pressured the Common Application (used by hundreds of colleges and universities) to include voluntary questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (Jaschik, 2010). After much discussion, the Common Application eventually rejected the proposal in early 2011, dismissing the idea as novel but currently irrelevant – they may revisit the decision depending on changing societal norms and expectations (Jaschik, 2015).

Since the failed proposal, institutions as varied as Duke University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Iowa, the University of



California, and Western Michigan University have independently added sexual orientation and gender identity questions to their admission application. In 2015, more than 25 organizations sent a letter to the Common Application imploring the Common Application to adopt the now overdue changes proposed in 2010 (Jaschik, 2015). Finally, in early 2016, the Common Application added a voluntary question about gender identity, distinguishing it from “legal sex” or “sex assigned at birth.” Students with minority sexual and romantic identities, however, are still forced to include gay-rights activism on their applications in order to disseminate this information, despite the fact that many straight students are involved in GSRM activism as well (Jaschik, 2016). There is no sign that the Common Application will reconsider questions on sexual orientation anytime soon.

If we cannot have consistent success when students are applying to colleges, there is a way to get this information from an enrollment perspective. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has had more progressive updates in the past couple of years. A recent update in 2014 saw the addition of questions about gender identity and sexual orientation (Figure 1 shows how those questions appear on the survey). The NSSE acknowledges several problems with these types of questions, such as inconsistency in wording, difficulty in achieving transparency, and confusion from heterosexual/cisgender students when encountering these questions. They provide some recommendations, though, on how colleges could more easily ask these questions, including a “multiple step method to assess gender variant status” and

“write-in [options] for both sexual orientation and gender identity” (BrckaLorenz, Clark, & Hurtado, 2016).

The main problem with the NSSE is that the survey is only given once every few years, to a small subgroup of randomly selected students at a university. Therefore, it can only really be used as a confirmation of previously made conclusions.

**What is your gender identity?**

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Another gender identity, please specify:
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

**Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?**

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Another sexual orientation, please specify:
- ☐ Questioning or unsure
- ☐ I prefer not to respond

**Figure 1: How NSSE asks about gender identity and sexual orientation**

Therefore, despite the progress that is being made on a national level, it is clear that these types of surveys are reactionary, relying on colleges and universities to jumpstart the process. As such, it is imperative that institutions of higher education increasingly take initiatives to implement data collection locally.

If a school is just starting to take note of this issue, should it respond by simply adding these questions to the university application? Not necessarily.

There are several reasons it might not be prudent to include sexual orientation and gender identity questions solely on the university admissions application. The process of developing a GSRM identity can be a lengthy and age-related process (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). It is quite possible that students do not discover that they are queer until during the college experience. Also, sexual orientation and gender identities are often fluid and may evolve while a student is enrolled in college (Windmeyer, et al., 2013). Allowing a single or limited response from students regarding sexual orientation and gender identity therefore may not be representative of the entire GSRM student population on a campus. Additionally, students may feel uncomfortable disclosing that information on a college application, fearing that the answer could either affect their admission to the college or somehow be disclosed to their parents. Were a college or university to unintentionally disclose an applicant's sexuality or gender identity through intercepted correspondence with the applicant's parents, very real issues of youth safety and homelessness may arise (Ceglar, 2012). As only 46 percent of undergraduate students are open with their parents about their sexual identity, it can be assumed that even fewer high school students are (Ceglar, 2012). One cannot simply assume that college admissions data is able to paint an accurate picture of the campus's GSRM population.



If colleges cannot rely on accurate admissions data, what would be the next option? Purdue University, located in West Lafayette, IN, may have found the answer to that question. They chose to include a section in the student user interface, under “personal information,” where prospective and current students may self-report their sexual orientation and gender identity. In this case, it is treated identically to many other types of identifying information (such as addresses, emergency contacts, and ethnicity/race). It’s optional, so students are not pressured to report this information, and students receive a reminder email each year to update all of their information (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity). They are able to track both students’ initial responses and how those responses change over the students’ careers at Purdue. Even though this program was “soft launched” in 2015 and not publicly announced until 2016, 20 percent of Purdue’s student population have participated in self-reporting this data.

Through this interface, Purdue is able to identify the sexual orientation and gender identity of students that are considered academically at risk, which allows them to provide specialized resources (connections to specific student groups or the LGBTQ Center, as examples). It is still too early in the process to be able to track statistics such as persistency to graduation, and there are currently no other local schools with similar processes. Still, through this system Purdue has become a leading university in the conversation about how to record these statistics, and possible applications for them.

There are a few important distinctions to make about the process. First, while the data input screen seems very comprehensive and specific, it is possible that enough options are present to make analytical processes difficult. As such, on the back end of the student portal, an employee at Purdue manually assigns a “bucket” for each specific label (“bisexual” and “pansexual” may both fall into the “bisexual” bucket, for example). As students continue to use more diverse language to describe themselves, this may become an increasingly burdensome task. Additionally, unlike other factors with predefined or widely standardized categories, gender and sexual identities have a significant amount of overlap. What happens when a student is attracted to all genders romantically (panromantic), but no genders sexually (asexual)? Lastly, the system was developed “in house” at Purdue, so while it can be mimicked, it cannot be directly ported to another university.

Ultimately, regardless of what happens behind the scenes for university retention and demographic purposes, students should still be able to self-identify. While Purdue’s system may not be perfect, it is certainly a wonderful step in the right direction.

### New Student Task List

Your application for admission to Purdue University has been accepted!

Use the links below to prepare for your arrival at Purdue. Please read through the information under each link before proceeding, as some tasks may require additional action or payment to complete the task.

Purdue University strives to create an inclusive and welcoming community. If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an accommodation to access a program, class, activity or facility on campus, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 1247 or visit the web page at [www.purdue.edu/drc](http://www.purdue.edu/drc).

Your @purdue.edu email address is Purdue's official means of communication with you. Be sure to check it often at [myemail.purdue.edu](mailto:myemail.purdue.edu), as bills, updates, and other important information will be sent to you at that address.

#### ☒ Accept Your Offer of Admission

To accept your offer of admission you will need to pay a nonrefundable \$200 deposit unless you qualify for a deposit deferral. If you qualify for the deferral, you simply need to click on the button that reads, "Accept My Offer of Admission." Students admitted before April 11, the deadline to accept your offer of admission is May 1. Students admitted after April 10 must accept their offer within three weeks of their admission decision. Use the [admitted student website](#), for information about deposit deadlines.

#### ☒ Orientation to Purdue

##### ☒ Select your STAR Session

STAR is Purdue's Summer Transition, Advising and Registration program. All new domestic students (beginner and transfer), admitted for the fall term, are required to participate in a STAR session:

- **Domestic Students** - Colleges, schools, and programs offer various dates for students to attend in the summer. Here is a set of [instructions](#) to guide you through the process of registering for a STAR session. More information found at [www.purdue.edu/star](http://www.purdue.edu/star). Students who feel that they are unable to attend may request an exception and, if granted, will be enrolled in the online Virtual STAR program. To request an exception, email [studentsuccess@purdue.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@purdue.edu).
- **International Students** - International students admitted for the fall term will be automatically enrolled in the online version which is called Virtual STAR. In early May, they will receive an email message about this preparation and will be provided with instructions about how to access and complete this course. International students can choose to visit Purdue in the summer and attend STAR in-person with the domestic students although this is completely voluntary. International students who attend STAR in-person will not be required to complete the Virtual STAR course.

##### ☐ Register Guests for STAR

Register Guests for STAR - Purdue's Summer Transition, Advising and Registration program. Guest Registration will be available after you have registered for your STAR day.

**Orientation Week!** In the fall, just before the start of school, all new students are expected to participate in a Purdue New Student Orientation experience. While a few students will participate in orientation programs run by Bands and Purdue Musical Organizations, the rest of the students will attend Boiler Gold Rush. Information about each is below:

##### ☐ Register to attend Boiler Gold Rush!

- **BGR** is Purdue's week-long orientation held the week before classes begin. During BGR you will learn how to succeed academically, will make friends, and will learn your way around campus. There is a \$320 fee to attend BGR which covers most meals and all programmatic costs during the week. More information can be found at [www.purdue.edu/bgr](http://www.purdue.edu/bgr).
- **Band Camp** - Students interested in trying out for Purdue's All-American Marching band are required to participate in Band Camp which takes place at the same time as BGR. More information can be found at <http://www.purdue.edu/bands/>.
- **Purdue Musical Organizations (PMO)** - Students who audition and are accepted into either the Purdue Varsity Glee Club or the Purdueettes, will be required to participate in PMO's week long pre-season camp, which takes place during BGR. More information can be found at [www.purdue.edu/varsity](http://www.purdue.edu/varsity).

Figure 2: Image from myPurdue portal



[New Student](#)
[Need to Know](#)
[Academic](#)
[Financial](#)
[Resources](#)
[Help/Navigation](#)

**Quick Links**

Personal Information

[Addresses & Phones](#)
[Email Addresses](#)
[Parent/Guardian Contacts](#)
[Emergency Contacts](#)
[Ethnicity & Race](#)
[Religious Preference](#)
[Name Change Info](#)
[SSN Change Info](#)
[Student Record](#)
[Standardized Test Scores](#)
[Disability Letters](#)
[Sexual Orientation/Gender](#)

Schedule

[Week-at-a-Glance](#)
[Concise Schedule](#)
[Detail Schedule](#)
[Evening & Final Exams](#)
[Scheduling Assistant FAQ](#)
[Use Scheduling Assistant](#)

Registration Tools

[Do I have any Holds?](#)
[Registration Status](#)
[Current Registration](#)
[Look Up Classes](#)
[Add or Drop Classes](#)
[Registration PIN](#)
[Registration Fees](#)
[Degree Evaluation](#)
[Transfer Credit to Purdue](#)
[Registration History](#)
[Withdrawal Information](#)
[My Textbooks](#)
[Initial Course Participation](#)

Grades

[Final Grades](#)
[Grade Detail](#)

**My Courses**

[Click here to:](#)  
View your course schedule, access your course home pages, email your professors, communicate with classmates, and access many more course-related materials.

**Enrollment Certification**

[National Student Clearinghouse](#)  
The place to order your enrollment certification for employment, housing, healthcare or loan deferment. Certifications requiring GPA must be requested through the Office of the Registrar.

**Destination: Graduation**

[myPurduePlan](#) *(Best viewed in Chrome or Firefox)*  
Undergraduate and professional students, your one stop to track your degree progress, determine the courses still needed for graduation, see how a CODO may affect your degree progress and more. *myPurduePlan will be unavailable from 4:00 P.M. 12/14/2013 through 8:00 A.M. 12/15/2013.*

**Textbooks**

[myTextbooks](#)  
For comparative textbook pricing, click on one of the links below.

<a href="#">Follett's Bookstore</a>	<a href="#">University Bookstore</a>	<a href="#">Barnes &amp; Noble</a>
<a href="#">Amazon.com</a>	<a href="#">TextCloset.com</a>	<a href="#">Borders is now Barnes &amp; Noble</a>

**Graduate Students**

[Graduate School Plan of Study](#)  
The Plan of Study Generator is for enrolled graduate students.

Figure 3: Arrow highlighting Sexual Orientation quick link

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**Provide Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Information**

Any information provided below is considered confidential. Documentation will not be released outside the academic community without your consent or the compulsion of legal process. Definitions of terminology related to the categories and selection options below can be found at this link: <https://www.purdue.edu/lgbtq/Documents/Terminology.pdf>.

---

Sexual Orientation

**Please select one or more options from the list below to describe your sexual orientation:**

- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Straight/Heterosexual
- ☒ Lesbian
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Same Gender Loving
- ☐ Two Spirit
- ☐ Prefer Not to Disclose
- ☐ Not Listed

---

Gender Identity

**Please select one option from the list below to describe your gender identity:**

- ☒ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Female-to-Male (FTM) Transgender Man/Trans Man
- ☐ Male-to-Female (MTF) Transgender Woman/Trans Woman
- ☐ Gender Queer - Identifying as neither man or woman
- ☐ Prefer Not to Disclose
- ☐ Not Listed

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Save

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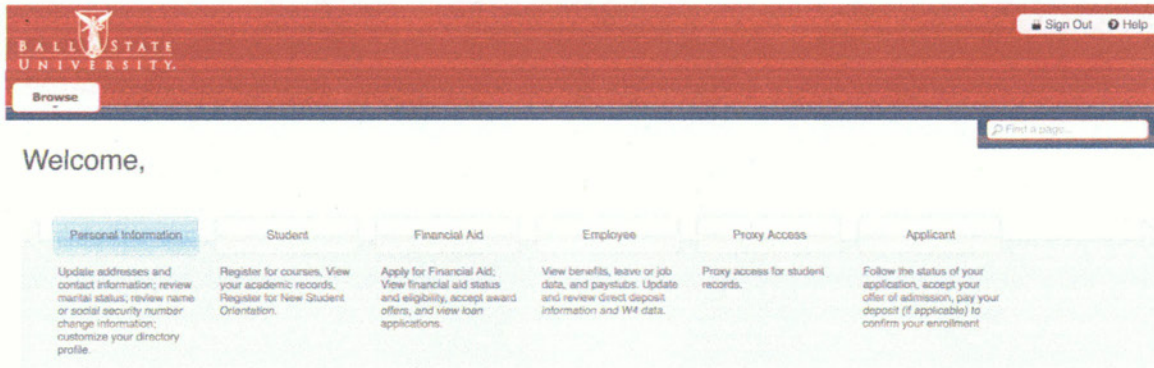
Figure 4: Image displaying the sexual orientation and gender identity options

### **Application of Tracking at Ball State University**

Purdue's tracking process has been active since fall semester of 2015. That has given other institutions two school years to discuss implementing this or similar structures into their student information system. Few schools have had this conversation, and even fewer are taking steps towards developing similar processes. Unfortunately, Ball State University has not yet taken any initiative in creating this space for queer students, despite having an extremely active and out GSRM student population. Queer students have taken on increasingly prominent leadership roles in Student Government Association, the Big Four diversity organizations (Asian American Student Association, Black Student Union, Latinx Student Union, and Spectrum), Student Voluntary Services, Greek Life, and more. These are students actively working to get their voices heard.

Ball State's student information system is extremely similar to the one used at Purdue. While there is not a precedent for recording information such as sexual orientation and gender identity, there are already self-reported open-ended fields in the system, such as emergency contacts and preferred names. Additionally, there are optional sections students can fill out to report their veteran or disability status.

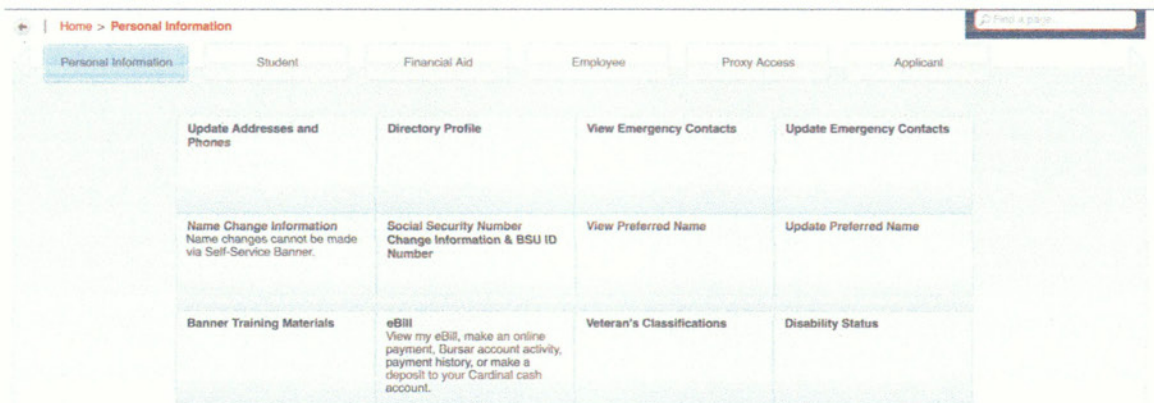




The myBSU student banner features a red header with the Ball State University logo on the left and "Sign Out" and "Help" links on the right. Below the header is a "Browse" button and a search bar labeled "Find a page...". The main content area is titled "Welcome," and contains six tabs: Personal Information, Student, Financial Aid, Employee, Proxy Access, and Applicant. Each tab has a corresponding description of available services.

Personal Information	Student	Financial Aid	Employee	Proxy Access	Applicant
Update addresses and contact information; review marital status; review name or social security number change information; customize your directory profile.	Register for courses. View your academic records. Register for New Student Orientation.	Apply for Financial Aid; View financial aid status and eligibility; accept award offers; and view loan applications.	View benefits, leave or job data, and paystubs. Update and review direct deposit information and W4 data.	Proxy access for student records.	Follow the status of your application; accept your offer of admission; pay your deposit (if applicable) to confirm your enrollment.

Figure 5: The myBSU student banner



The Student Personal Information page shows a breadcrumb trail "Home > Personal Information" and a search bar "Find a page...". Below the tabs, the "Personal Information" tab is active, displaying a grid of links for updating personal data.

Personal Information	Student	Financial Aid	Employee	Proxy Access	Applicant
Update Addresses and Phones	Directory Profile	View Emergency Contacts	Update Emergency Contacts		
Name Change Information Name changes cannot be made via Self-Service Banner.	Social Security Number Change Information & BSU ID Number	View Preferred Name	Update Preferred Name		
Banner Training Materials	eBill View my eBill, make an online payment, Dursar account activity, payment history, or make a deposit to your Cardinal cash account.	Veteran's Classifications	Disability Status		

Figure 6: The Student Personal Information page

## Disability Status

Form CC-305  
 OMB Control Number 1250-0005  
 Expires 1/31/2017

**Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability**

**Why are you being asked to complete this page?**

Because we do business with the government, we must reach out to, hire, and provide equal opportunity to qualified people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> To help us measure how well we are doing, we are asking you to tell us if you have a disability or if you have ever had a disability. Completing this form is voluntary, but we hope that you will choose to fill it out. If you are applying for a job, any answer you give will be kept private and will not be used against you in any way.

If you already work for us, your answer will not be used against you in any way. Because a person may become disabled at any time, we are required to ask all of our employees to update their information every five years. You may voluntarily self-identify as having a disability on this form without fear of any punishment because you did not identify as having a disability earlier.

**How do I know if I have a disability?**

You are considered to have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment or medical condition that substantially limits a major life activity, or if you have a history or record of such an impairment or medical condition.

Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

• Blindness	• Autism	• Bipolar disorder	• Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
• Deafness	• Cerebral palsy	• Major depression	• Obsessive compulsive disorder
• Cancer	• HIV/AIDS	• Multiple sclerosis (MS)	• Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair
• Diabetes	• Schizophrenia	• Missing limbs or partially missing limbs	• Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)
• Epilepsy	• Muscular dystrophy		

**Please check one of the boxes below:**

☐ YES, I HAVE A DISABILITY (or previously had a disability)  
☐ NO, I DON'T HAVE A DISABILITY  
☐ I DON'T WISH TO ANSWER

**Submit**

Form CC-305  
 OMB Control Number 1250-0005  
 Expires 1/31/2017

**Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability**

**Reasonable Accommodation Notice**

Federal law requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities. Please tell us if you require a reasonable accommodation to apply for a job or to perform your job. Examples of reasonable accommodation include making a change to the application process or work procedures, providing documents in an alternate format, using a sign language interpreter, or using specialized equipment.

<sup>1</sup> Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. For more information about this form or the equal employment obligations of Federal contractors, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) website at [www.dol.gov/ofccp](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp).

**PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete.

Figure 7: The self-reported Disability Status page from the myBSU student banner

The Disability Status page is particularly relevant, as it demonstrates many of the capabilities that would be required for a SO/GI page. The top of the page provides the reason that Ball State is asking students to provide this information, stressing both Ball State's nondiscriminatory policy and the voluntary nature of the questions. The second section provides information that would assist students in filling out the form, which would be particularly helpful for students unfamiliar with language surrounding the requested information. Halfway down the page is the question. Students are asked to check the box that most closely describes their experience.

With word changes and minimal structure changes, this process can easily be adapted to describe sexual orientation and gender identity. The top section should describe the potential uses and benefits for students to provide the information. The second section would then list basic definitions, following the guidance of the NSSE to limit confusion, especially on behalf of heterosexual and/or cisgender students. Then, the options for SO/GI should be listed. Purdue provides a good example for this, with a fairly comprehensive list of options ending with an open-ended input box. These simple adaptations would allow Ball State to measure the success of GSRM students on campus, opening the door for possible application of the retention programs that Ball State is known for.



## **Conclusion**

Ball State aims to achieve a four-year graduation rate of 50 percent, and a 6-year graduation rate of 65%, by the end of the current term (Ball State University, 2017b). Additionally, the university wants to maintain at least an 80 percent first-year retention rate (Ball State University, 2017b). It does this in part by identifying at-risk populations and developing programs to help those students succeed at the university. Currently, Ball State has ambassador programs for commuter and transfer students, peer coaches for sophomore students, and a variety of programs for underclassmen 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars (Ball State University, 2017a). There are a variety of other targeted programs that seek to aid student success, ranging from early start programs to student organizations.

The framework already exists to support GSRM students on Ball State's campus. It is now up to the university to monitor the success of queer students, and tailor their already existing retention programs to the specific needs of this population. That starts with acknowledging this population and tracking their careers at Ball State in order to better support them as a marginalized community. It is irresponsible to do otherwise.

I encourage Ball State University to listen to the needs of the queer individuals on campus and to actively participate in the conversation of what success looks like for this subset of students. If done quickly and efficiently, Ball State can easily become a leader in student retention.

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